



Mass Effect: Awakening

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Chapter 1 by aburton

He ran and dodged, jumped and ducked through the maintenance tunnels in the lower areas of Omega. Old pipes and half-rusted stair wells created a labrynth of confusing twists and turns. He had lived down here most of his life down here, hiding and foraging. His breath came in quick ragged bouts and his footsteps banged on the metal walkways. He hoped the noises of machinery and venting steam would drown out the noise he made. His only concern was staying ahead of his pursuers. He hoped he already lost them.

stopping, he turned around and strained to hear over the ambient noises. he thought he could hear shouting. he reassessed his surroundings and dashed down a different walkway. This was the spot.

He stood on top of the rail, positioned his feet and sprang into the air. His arms and legs spun like turbines in the air. He felt gravity begin to reassert itself. grunting with effort he reached for the opposite side.

his fingers grabbed metal and he gripped the rail for all he was worth. His muscles strained and he yelled out with pain. His momentum swung his body into the underside of the walkway and crashed into the sharp edges of metal reinforcements. he yelled out in pain again, but he held on.

He struggled, strained, and finally pulled himself up onto the walkway. A sigh of relief escaped his lungs. This walkway was on a different network of stairwells and hallways. Hopefully it

would take his pursuers a while to figure it out.

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He slowed his pace in order to minimize the clatter of his footsteps. Hopefully his misdirection worked. He took this time

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stayed alive, ever since his mother died last year. He was too young and couldn't afford the rent in their two room apartment.

His head slowly dipped with sadness and pain. He missed his mother. Not paying attention he walked right into a wall and fell back onto the walkway. He looked up in shock.

Three older boys stood looming over him, laughing and cracking their knuckles. The one in front finished typing on an omni tool and it quickly vanished. He chuckled down at him.

"Like my upgrade? You can't run from us now, Bander." He sneered down at the boy. "Hey Kurtz, what should we do with him?" He said to his cohort.

"Give him a good roughing like last time, Digs. That never gets old." Kurtz replied with a grin. That wasn't even his real name. He thought it sounded cool.

Digs stepped forward and stomped on Bander's stomach. Bander screamed out in pain and shock, the air rushing from his lungs as he clutched himself. The three stood over him laughing.

Another one stepped forward and kicked him in the head and bright stars blazed across his vision. Laughing and pain filled Bander's world. He wrapped his head in his arms and curled into a ball to try and protect himself. The pain was too much. He tried to roll away but they kept coming.

"You're going to stay down here!" Digs yelled. "If I ever see you in the apartment district or anywhere near there, the beating will be even worse."

Bander yelled out in pain and fear. He couldn't help it. He knew he looked weak. This was his life. He ran, he hid and hoped he would not get beaten. The three boys stopped for a moment. It gave him a moment's respite. and he peeked through his fingers.

"Look at you!" Digs said, disgust filling his words. "Are you crying?" He reached down and grabbed him by the wrist and started to drag him across the walkway. Bander could only kick in

a feeble attempt to escape.

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He whimpered as Digs dragged him further and he began to fill his eyes. Something happened and anger started to boil in his chest. He turned into determined

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grunting and finally to hateful yelling. A burning sensation spread through him like a wave and he felt it gather at his fingertips.

Bander thrust his free palm at Digs and it exploded in blue crackling light. The older boy let go of Bander as the force of it crashed into Dig's chest. It sent him flying through the air. He hit the railing behind him so hard it caused him to flip and go spinning over the side. His screams could be heard over the hissing of steam until he hit the bottom. The other two boys looked at him and then each other before they ran the other way.

Bander looked at his hand with astonishment, the residual biotic powers still tinged across his skin. He picked himself up despite the pain that wracked his body. He slowly made his way back to his makeshift hideout and hoped he had some medigel left. All he wanted to so was sleep.

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